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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN PROMISES CONTINUED ANTI-TIP REFORMS

¶1. (SBU) PolOff delivered the Russian translation of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report to Abdurahmon Azimov, head of the Interagency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons, July 5. (Note: PolOff had previously delivered the Trafficking in Persons report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the day it was released in English. End Note.) When Azimov questioned Tajikistan's Tier 2 ranking, PolOff explained that although Tajikistan is making efforts to curb trafficking, it still does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. PolOff expressed appreciation for the actions already taken by the government and outlined the areas where the government needs to improve, including: amending trafficking legislation to better define trafficking, the need to curb corruption, particularly among government offices, and the need vigorously to investigate, prosecute, convict and sentence traffickers or those involved in trafficking crimes.

¶2. (SBU) Azimov thanked PolOff for the United States' critique of Tajikistan's anti-trafficking efforts and for the Embassy's support and assistance. He informed PolOff that the interagency commission has submitted draft amendments to Tajikistan's trafficking in persons law and expects parliament will pass it soon. Imbedded in the draft laws are provisions that mandate the government finance and set up an additional five shelters for trafficking victims. In addition, various government ministries and agencies are contributing to a new draft body of law regarding corruption. Azimov said the law will include specific points on corruption related to trafficking in persons.

¶3. (SBU) Azimov produced a lengthy report and explained that the interagency recently audited the Ministry of Interior to examine its anti-trafficking activities. Azimov commented that the Ministry of Interior is "doing its job," but did not elaborate. The government continues to repatriate victims from the United Arab Emirates and organize seminars to train government officials to fight trafficking in persons. In April, President Rahmon visited the United Arab Emirates and signed five bilateral cooperation agreements which included an agreement between the two countries' Ministries of Interior for increased cooperation to fight organized crime rings and an extradition agreement. In addition, 25 Afghan officials have visited Tajikistan on an exchange to share information and learn from each other's experiences in combating trafficking in persons.

¶4. (U) The Embassy has posted the TIP report on the Embassy website in English and Russian and will soon post it in Tajiki. PolOff presented the report at a student conversation group at the Bactria Center June 20 and at the American Corner July 3. Post will also host a roundtable discussion and show a film later this month.

